



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Mark Johnson, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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October 8, 2018

TO: School Nutrition Administrators

FROM: Lynn Harvey, Chief
School Nutrition Services

SUBJECT: Request for Equipment Assistance Grant Applications (Applications are due to NCDPI by Wednesday December 5, 2018)

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) provides an appropriation of \$941,829.00 to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for grants to eligible School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). As stipulated in the CAA, these funds must be used to purchase new equipment to serve healthier school meals that meet the updated meal patterns, to increase student participation, with emphasis on serving more fruit and vegetables in school meals, including items purchased locally, improving food safety and other purposes that are consistent with the program's overall goals of providing nutritious, appealing affordable meals to students. These funds are time-limited ***and must be fully expended by September 30, 2019***. *If an SFA is unable to expend the grant funds in their entirety before September 30, 2019, please do not apply for this round of grants as funds not expended by this time will revert to the USDA.*

Funding

Grants will be awarded to SFAs using an Application process. Consistent with Federal requirements, priority will be given in the following areas:

- High need schools where fifty percent or more of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals or for schools participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), those with the highest Identified Student Percentage (ISP). Please use the individual school/site's most current ISP (as of April 2018) when completing the Application Summary page.
- Schools with limited access to other resources to support the purchase of equipment; therefore, SFAs with three (3) months operating balance or greater (as of June 2018) will not be eligible for this grant opportunity.
- Schools with old equipment that no longer effectively nor efficiently serves the program and should be replaced.

In addition, in accordance with Federal guidance, priority must be given to schools that did not receive a previous Equipment Assistance Grant award under the FY 2015, FY 2016 Agriculture Appropriations Acts and FY 2017 Consolidated Appropriations Act.

SCHOOL NUTRITION SERVICES

SCHOOL OPERATIONS DIVISION

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

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When considering the equipment needs of the various schools within the SFA, please remember 2 CFR Part 200.33 defines equipment as *“nonexpendable, tangible property with a useful life of more than one year and a per unit acquisition cost of \$5,000”*. **However, for the FY 2018 Equipment Assistance Grants, Congress has specified the threshold for the purchase of equipment cannot be lower than \$1,000. This is a one-time exemption. This threshold only applies to FY 2018 equipment grant funds. No grants will be awarded for less than \$1,000.**

Funds from the NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant may be used to cover the actual cost of equipment only; the SFA is expected to cover the sales tax and all costs associated with delivery, installation, warranties or any other costs. As with all Federal funds, equipment purchases made with NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant funds must be necessary, reasonable and allowable, and the equipment must be procured in accordance with 7 CFR 210.21 and 2 CFR Part 200.317-326. For example, use of the NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant funds to purchase a steamer for the School Nutrition Program would be a necessary, reasonable and allowable cost. However, renovation of the school nutrition area would fall under the category of construction costs and are therefore unallowable; renovation expenses must be borne by the Local Education Agency's general fund.

Depending upon the SFA's simplified acquisition threshold, competitive quotes or formal bids must be obtained from at least three prospective vendors. **For equipment that exceeds the district's simplified acquisition threshold, a formal Invitation for Bid (IFB) must be used to seek competition.** For purchases under the district's simplified acquisition threshold, a written Request for Quotes (RFQ) will be acceptable. Please comply with the district's board-approved School Nutrition Procurement Plan to determine whether a formal or informal procurement method is indicated. If an RFQ is indicated, equipment specifications must be clearly defined and all required terms and conditions must be included in a written document. For any IFB or RFQ, please include a statement indicating the SFA has the right to reject any and all bids or quotes in the event the SFA is not awarded an Equipment Assistance Grant. The SFA must follow all Federal, State and Local procurement laws when purchasing equipment with these grant funds.

How to Apply for NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant Funds

Instructions for successfully preparing and submitting a grant Application are described in this communication. Instructions for managing the grant funds at the local level and responding to Federal reporting requirements are also included.

This communication includes the:

- (1) SFA Application Summary and**
- (2) School Application**

(1) SFA Application Summary: The purpose of the SFA Application Summary is to enable SFA officials to prioritize equipment assistance grant requests. Ideally, funds would be

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available for all applications; however, this is highly unlikely given the limited funding. Therefore, each SFA must prioritize its requests. Where possible, priority for Equipment Assistance Grants will be given in the same order of preference as listed by the SFA on the SFA Application Summary.

The SFA must provide the student enrollment and Average Daily Participation (ADP) for lunch as of October 30, 2018. A brief description of the equipment is required along with the age of the current equipment if the Equipment Assistance Grant will be used to replace old equipment. The SFA must indicate whether the grant funds may be fully expended by September 30, 2019 and whether equipment requested will have a useful life of one or more years; no grants will be awarded for equipment that does not meet these criteria. Finally, the SFA Application Summary must be signed by the School Nutrition Administrator and Superintendent.

(2) School Application: A School Application must be completed for each piece of equipment for which grant funds are requested. If one school is in need of three (3) pieces of equipment, then three (3) School Applications must be completed. The School Application must include the total school enrollment, the percentage of students that qualify for free or reduced-price meals OR the current Identified Student Percentage (as of April 2018), if the school participates in the Community Eligibility Provision, and the average daily participation (for lunch) as of October 30, 2018.

Each School Application must include a brief description and specification for the equipment requested. Competitive formal bids or written quotes must be obtained for each piece of equipment included in the Application. The SFA must select the most responsive and responsible bid or quote from all bids or quotes submitted. The amount of the most competitive bid or quote, as determined by the SFA, must be provided. A copy of the original solicitation and the bid or quote provided by the most responsive and responsible Vendor must be attached to the School Application

Equipment purchases using CAA funds must achieve one or more of the following goals:

1. Improve the safety of food served in the School Nutrition Programs;
2. Increase the overall energy efficiency of the School Nutrition operations;
3. Increase student participation;
4. Improve the quality of meals in the School Nutrition Programs;
5. Allow for the adoption of innovative meal service strategies (i.e. changes in the meal service or dining environment that provide lunchroom changes that provide more convenience and appeal to the student population, highlighting healthier choices, redesigning menus that target healthier entrees/options); and
6. Promote the storage, preparation and/or service of locally grown agricultural products.

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For each piece of equipment requested, please complete the checklist. The justification must be based on all of the goals listed above. Please find below a list of suggested equipment that achieve the stated goals:

Reach-In Refrigerator/Freezer	Holding Cabinet
Cold or Hot Serve Counter	Serving Line
Steamer	Combi-Oven/Steamer
Convection Oven	Hot Food Table
Pass-Through Heated Cabinet	Pass-Through Cooler
Salad Bar	Stand Up Mixer
Combination Steamer	Evolution Boilerless Steamer
Cooler & Freezer	Commercial Range

Submitting the SFA Application Summary and School Application(s)

In order to complete the application process, the SFA must submit two (2) copies each of the SFA Application Summary and School Application, each with **original signatures**.

The applications must be received on or before 5:00 pm, Wednesday December 5, 2018 by the School Nutrition Services Section at the address shown below:

via non-U.S. Postal Service company (i.e., FedEx, UPS):
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
School Nutrition Services Section
301 N. Wilmington Street 7th Floor South
Raleigh, NC 27601
ATTENTION: EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE GRANT APPLICATION

We discourage the use of the US Postal Service since there is no assurance that the application packet will arrive in a timely manner.

We recommend applications be delivered to the section by traceable means in a manner that enables the SFA to receive written confirmation of delivery. **Applications/Proposals that arrive after 5:00 PM on Wednesday December 5, 2018 will not be considered.**

Criteria for Application Selection

To be selected for an Equipment Assistance Grant, the SFA must:

- Operate in compliance with the Regulations of the Federally-assisted School Nutrition Programs for which the SFA is approved;
- Submit the completed SFA Application Summary with schools and equipment prioritized;

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- Submit one (1) School Application per piece of equipment, per school;
- Include a copy of the solicitation document and the competitive bid or written quote submitted by the most responsive and responsible Vendor with each School Application;
- Be able to spend the Equipment Assistance Grant funds in their entirety no later than **September 30, 2019**;
- Indicate the percentage of students that qualify for Free/Reduced Price meals OR the Identified Student Percentage for each school for which funds are requested;
- Indicate the Average Daily Participation for lunch in each school for which an application is submitted;
- Justify the need for the equipment based on one or more of the equipment goals;
- Comply with the requirement to have no more than Three (3) Months Operating Balance; and
- Submit complete and accurate SFA Application Summary and School Applications by **December 5, 2018**. Please remember, for accuracy's sake, sales tax may not be included in the Vendor's Bid/Quote since this amount will not be part of the grant award

Notification of and Management of Equipment Assistance Grant Funds

A Selection Committee will review all Equipment Assistance Grant Applications. The applications will be scored based on the criteria listed in the previous section. Applications receiving the highest total scores will be ranked by score. Available funds will be allocated to the Applications receiving the highest scores. All reasonable efforts will be made to distribute funds equitably based on district size and geographic location. The State Board of Education will approve the final grant awards during its April meeting. SFAs will be notified of their grant award(s) and should be prepared to expend the grant funds, in their entirety, by September 30, 2019. A final report of expenditures will be due to the NCDPI by September 6, 2019. If the entire amount of the grant is not expended, remaining funds must be returned to NCDPI.

Equipment Assistance Grant funds cannot be co-mingled with other program funds and must be maintained separately from any other funds. The USDA has not provided final reporting requirements at this time. Reporting requirements will be issued simultaneously with the grant award. The Equipment Assistance Grant Proposal forms were created as word documents. Please type information in the attached forms and complete the checklist as provided in the directions; this will enable the Selection Committee to review the proposals more quickly than if they are hand-written. Completing the electronic forms will also allow the SFA to use additional space on the forms as needed.

Should you have questions about the Equipment Assistance Grant Application requirements or process, please contact Jacquelyn McGowan at Jacquelyn.McGowan@dpi.nc.gov On behalf of the School Nutrition Services section, good luck with this endeavor! We look forward to receiving your SFA's Application.

c: Superintendents
Finance Directors

Enclosure: Equipment Assistant Grant Application Forms

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Regulatory Requirements

Government-wide Regulations

[2 CFR Part 25](#): “Universal Identifier and System for Award Management”

[2 CFR Part 170](#): “Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information”

[2 CFR Part 175](#): “Award Term for Trafficking in Persons”

[2 CFR Part 180](#): “OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)”

[2 CFR Part 200](#): “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”

[2 CFR Part 400](#): USDA Implementing regulations “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”

[2 CFR Part 415](#): USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations”

[2 CFR Part 416](#): USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”

[2 CFR Part 417](#): USDA “Non-procurement Debarment & Suspension”

[2 CFR Part 418](#): USDA “New Restrictions on Lobbying”

2 CFR Part 421: USDA “Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”
Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2009, [Public Law 110-417](#)
Sections 745 and 746 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31)
“The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) [Pub. L. 109-282](#), [120 Stat. 1186](#) (2006) (codified at [31 USC 6101 note](#))

Cost Principles

[2 CFR, Part 200: Subpart E](#): Cost Principles

USDA Regulations

[7 CFR Part 15](#): “Nondiscrimination”

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). “Public access to Federal Financial Assistance records shall not be limited, except when such records must be kept confidential and would have been excepted from disclosure pursuant to the “Freedom of Information” regulation ([5 U.S.C. 552](#)).

ASSURANCE OF CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([42 U.S.C. 2000d- et seq.](#))

[28 CFR Part 42](#): “Nondiscrimination; Equal Employment Opportunity; Policies and Procedures”

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, [2 USC 1681 et seq.](#)

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[7 CFR Part 15a](#): “Education Programs or Activities Receiving or Benefitting from Federal Financial Assistance”

[28 CFR Part 41](#): “Implementation of Executive Order 12250, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Federally Assisted Programs”

The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, [42 USC 6101 et seq.](#) “The Grantee assures that it will immediately take any measures necessary to effectuate the requirements in these laws, regulations, and directives. The Grantee gives this assurance in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining the funds provided under this agreement.”

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), [42 USC 12101 et seq.](#) The ADA “prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment (Title I), state and local government services (Title II), and places of public accommodation and commercial facilities (Title III).”

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at:

http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

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